

reserve forest. While I was examining the skin, another local Adi came to me and reported that he had also killed a similar cat about a year back from the same reserve forest.

The Subansiri RF is mostly hilly being at the foot of the Eastern or Arunachal Himalaya and the habitat type is of tropical wet evergreen (now degraded at the lower reaches). Elevation in the forest ranges from 150 to above 1000 m. The cats seemed to have been shot at lower elevations.

On 10 August, 1991, I came across a skin in Muolzol Kuki village near Baghmari, south-west of Diphu town in Karbi Anglong District. It was killed by a local Karbi (Mikir) tribal hunter from the nearby Dhansiri RF in June-July, 1991.

One more skin was collected from a Karbi hamlet near Langcholiet on 3 May, 1992. It was also killed in the Dhansiri RF with the help of a *dao* on 27 April, 1992. Two local hunters (without gun) accompanied by trained dogs noticed the cat following latter's barking at a place *c* 9-10 km east of Langcholiet. It was on a tree-branch at about 6-7 m height.

The same hunters again saw a Marbled cat on 13 May, 1992, in the upper reaches of Karli Langso, *c* 6 km south-east of Langcholiet inside the Dhansiri RF.

The elevation of Dhansiri RF, where the cats have been recorded is about 200 m above msl. The habitat type is tropical semi-evergreen with a fairly good number of deciduous species. In comparison to Subansiri RF, this area is rather dry (rainfall less than 1000 mm a year while in Subansiri, it is around 3000 mm).

The specimen from Subansiri RF is the largest known in the world with a head-and-body length of 65 cm. The Baghmari specimen is 48 cm (only body), while that of Langcholiet specimen is 49 cm (head-and-body) and 49 cm (tail).

Both the areas are new localities for the species.

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6. GOAT PREDATION BY CLOUDED LEOPARD (*NEOFELIS NEBULOSA*) IN KAKOI RESERVE FOREST OF ASSAM

Kakoi Reserve Forest is about 19 km north of North Lakhimpur Town of Assam. In 1989 I was surveying the Kakoi and two other adjoining Reserve Forests, (the Ranga Reserve Forests and Dullong Reserve Forests) which are more or less contiguous along the foothills of Arunachal Pradesh.

On the morning of 3rd February, I was walking along a jungle track accompanied by a local wood cutter. Two km inside Kakoi R.F., our attention was attracted by a movement on the branches of a tree about 30 m to the left of the track. We could see two ravens hopping along the bough of a Hilikha tree and close to them was a black object perched in a fork of the main trunk. On moving closer to the tree we found the object to be a dead goat placed about 4 m above the ground.

On looking around we found three small

pugmarks on a patch of a damp anthill. These pugmarks were a little smaller than those of a leopard. Since I had never seen a leopard taking its prey up on a tree, and had only heard of it, my curiosity was roused. I decided to enquire in the nearby hamlets, the residents of which had some goats.

An old Santhal (tribal) woman from a nearby hamlet in Johing, informed me that one of her goats had been killed the previous evening while they were browsing on the bank of Dejoo river, on the edge of the jungle, about 70 m away from her. Since it was late in the evening, the old woman could only see a leopard-like animal attacking one of her goats. According to her, the animal was smaller than a common leopard and its skin was "patchy".

Next morning at about 0600 hr. accompanied by the wood cutter, I proceeded towards the spot

where the dead goat had been found. When we were about 22 m from the tree on which the dead goat was perched, I saw a leopard like animal lying on another horizontal bough close to the dead goat, and licking its right fore paw. Since we were facing the sun we could not get a clear view of the animal against the sun. We moved a little till we had an uninterrupted view of the animal. It was smaller than the common leopard, with large dull coloured patches all over the body.

We observed the animal for about 15-20 minutes, and from its size and colour pattern concluded that it was a clouded leopard.

We had been watching it for 15-20 minutes when the wood cutter brushed against a sapling, which made the leopard look in our direction and see us. It stood up on the bough and saw us more clearly. The wood cutter happened to remark that the leopard had seen us. On hearing the voice, the leopard rushed along the horizontal bough, and jumped down and vanished among the undergrowth.

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7. SIGHTING OF TAKIN (*BUDORCAS TAXICOLOR*) IN THE MEHAO WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, ARUNACHAL PRADESH

During my field work to study the vegetation and bird diversity of Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary, Dibang Valley, Arunachal Pradesh, I had the chance of sighting takin (*Budorcas taxicolor*). Takin is one of the rare and endangered rupicaprid (goat-antelope). It combines the features of the ox, goat and antelope. Its most striking feature is its convex 'face', heavy mouth, and thick neck. I was 150 m away from the animal, which was standing alone. There is a salt lick at this spot frequented by several ungulate species. The takin was grazing near the salt lick and did not move from the spot for nearly 20 minutes. Later, as we moved closer, the animal was disturbed and went down the steep valley. Since the terrain was very steep I could not get close in order to identify its sex, age and other features. A takin was reared by the Forest Department in an enclosure near the Mayodia guest house, which I used to observe closely whenever I was there. I was thus familiar with this animal and so there was no chance of misidentification. According to Prater (1971) the

takin is found in the Bhutan Himalayas, the Mishmi Hills and in the mountains of the Salween-Irrawaddy divide. It was reported by Manjrekar *et al.* (1990) that only indirect evidence of takin was found in the Mehao Sanctuary, during the survey of the species. Later, on enquiry, I was told by the locals that while other ungulates such as serow and sambar were sighted by them frequently at the salt lick, the takin was a rare sighting for them also. This sighting confirms the presence of takin in the Sanctuary. The habitat in that particular area is still comparatively undisturbed, due to which the ungulate sightings are more frequent. The hunting pressure is also comparatively low in this part of the Sanctuary due to the tough, inaccessible terrain.

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